DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 033 116 TE 001 539

By-Simon, Myron, Ed.

Concepts of English 1964: Traditions and Innovations. Report of the Annual English Conference of the Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of School Studies (14th, Ferndale, Michigan, March 12, 1964).

Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of School Studies, Inc., Mich.

Pub Date 12 Mar 64

Note-50p.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$2.60

Descriptors-*Composition (Literary), *Educational Trends, English Curriculum, *English Instruction, Individualized Instruction, Language Patterns, *Linguistics, Motivation Techniques, *Secondary Education, Structural Linguistics, Teaching Methods, Traditional Grammar, Transformation Generative Grammar, Transformation Theory (Language)

Traditions and emerging trends in the teaching of linguistics and composition are examined in this collection of papers. Joseph Mersand predicts a future emphasis on the subject of English as a discipline, leading to a more adequate preparation and increased supervision of English teachers and a greater stress in the classroom on written composition, the study of language development, sophisticated uses of instructional materials, and individualized instruction. Robert Donaldson charges that, despite a revolution in the field, few English teachers have incorporated linguistic insights into their classroom practices. Harold King surveys the growth of scientific investigations into language structure, and Marvin Greene articulates the role of linguistics in the teaching of English. Joe Darwin Palmer elaborates on Noam Chomsky's theory that transformational grammar can provide sets of rules to generate all the correct sentences in the English language, and Samuel Stone suggests some classroom applications of generative grammar. Floyd Bergman describes an individualized, sequential program to eliminate some of the problems in teaching composition, and Henry Maloney indicates methods of improving the content of junior high school compositions. (JB)

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CONCEPTS OF ENGLISH 1964: TRADITIONS AND INNOVATIONS

Report of

The Fourteenth Annual English Conference

of the

Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of School Studies

EDITED BY

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Ferndale High School
Ferndale, Michigan

March 12, 1964

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469 Education Building
Wayne State University
Detroit, Mich. 48202
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THE EMERGING ENGLISH CURRICULUM OF THE 1960's

by Joseph Mersand

A study of the English program in our country over the past fifty years would indicate that in one way or another it was always emerging. Thus in 1917, when J. Fleming Hosic and his colleagues from the National Council of Teachers of English and the National Education Association prepared that historic document, The Reorganization of English in the Secondary Schools,[1] many of our teachers felt that at long last our bondage to domination of the colleges was broken and that we in the secondary schools had finally emerged.

Later, in 1935, when W. Wilbur Hatfield and his committee produced An Experience Curriculum in English,[2] we emerged again, this time with a new philosophy, set of objectives, and methodology. In 1946, Max J. Herzberg prepared a special issue for the Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals entitled The Emerging Curriculum in English.[3] In 1952, under the direction of Dora V. Smith, the Commission on the English Curriculum, first organized in 1945, offered the first of five volumes, The English Language Arts,[4] and, in 1956, The English Language Arts in the Secondary School.[5] In 1959, the Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board was organized. In 1960, its first statement of objectives was widely disseminated and publicized; and in the summers of 1961-1962 hundreds of secondary English teachers attended institutes organized by the Commission to study what many considered an emerging curriculum in English.

Finally, we have that informative document by Arno Jewett, specialist in Secondary Language Arts, U. S. Office of Education, The English Language Arts in American High Schools,[6] in which he studied some 285 courses of study in some 150 communities and in which he concludes with some emerging trends as he observed them. Thus, we see that English in America in the past forty to fifty years has had no lack of emergings, as well as emergencies; no lack of trends, tendencies, or directions. In fact, it would seem to some of us, that no sooner had English emerged in one area and settled down, than it began to emerge in quite a different fashion in some other area. Some would even say: let us stop emerging for a while and get back to the fundamentals. This would be, in truth, a kind of emerging in reverse.

Nevertheless, the English instruction of the 1960's will be somewhat different in patterns and scope, in methodology and in content, from the English of earlier decades. I should like to explore what I believe some of these emerging trends will be so that we may prepare ourselves to become more effective in our daily tasks.

Like Cardinal Newman in his Apologia pro Vita Sua, I should indicate my qualifications for daring to address teachers, many of whom have far more experience and perception than my own. First, my thirty-three years of experience as a classroom teacher and twenty years of experience as a supervisor have given me some insights into the teaching of English that only daily contact with thousands of pupils and hundreds of teachers can give over these many years. Second, the four years that I have been privileged to serve on the Executive Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English have brought me to over fifty affiliates of the Council in almost one-third of our states. Finally, since 1957, I have been engaged in a survey of the attitudes toward the teaching of English by some 1,250 outstanding educators, business executives, civil service administrators, publishers, librarians, judges, congressmen, and deans of law schools. Their views on what is right and what is wrong with the teaching of English and their recommendations for improvement constitute the contents of the volume, Attitudes Toward English Teaching,[7] from which I shall quote from time to time.

The emerging trends on the basis of my personal experience, visits to many parts of the country, and responses from 1,250 well-informed leaders in many walks of life are as follows:

Greater importance will be assigned to English as the most important subject in the entire curriculum. English to me is central, continuous, cumulative, and all-pervasive.

There is no question that the public at large, members of boards of education, representatives in government, and educated people generally are convinced that upon the literacy of our citizenry may depend the future of our nation. Although the extent of federal funds expended for Project English is minute in comparison with similar allocations for such areas as science, foreign languages, and mathematics, yet these funds do increase yearly and in time we hope that we shall get the sums we

need. The whole story of Project English is one of which we may all feel proud, eve
though its results will not be known for three or four years.[8]

As for the view of enlightened citizens toward English, my favorite quotation is still that of W. W. Watson, Chairman of the Physics Department of Yale University

> I feel that the most important subject in the entire course of study in the elementary and college preparatory years is the English language. What can be more important than to handle our own work-a-day language with facility, no matter what the life work, business or profession? I have some younger physics colleagues who obviously write with difficulty. They are promising scientists who love to work in the laboratory but they are laggards in writing papers that describe their results. But what good are research reports unless they are properly described in a well-written report?
>
> Also, it is most important that a scientist or engineer be able to get on his feet and speak clearly about his work. Some practice in public speaking, debating, or dramatics should be a part of every student's course.
>
> I am pleased to note that one of President Conant's main recommendations is that all school students should study English every year, and that half this work should be in composition.

The second emerging trend is greater emphasis on written composition by discovering better ways of teaching; by reducing the size of classes; by reducing the number of classes per English teacher; by more provision for individual conferences; and by the utilization of qualified lay readers. Exciting developments are taking place in written composition instruction at all levels. The brochure by Richard Braddock and his colleagues on Research in Written Composition has demonstrated how little has really been known on a scientific basis; and, what is more important, wha
has already been discovered.[9]

The NEA Composition Project will undoubtedly reveal new concepts and valuable procedures. And I am happy to see that the February 1964 issue of the Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals has a substantial article or

this project by its director for the first year, Arno Jewett.[10]

Many of the eleven Curriculum Centers funded by the Cooperative Research Branch of the U. S. Office of Education are studying written composition in various sequences; and from these centers we may expect some valuable data.

The third trend will be greater emphasis on individualization of instruction for all students, the bright, the average, the culturally disadvantaged, the culturally different, and the slow. We have given lip service to this trend for many years, but we have not quite known how to go about achieving our objectives. Take the one aspect of teaching the culturally different. This is one of America's most demanding educational problems and for years different communities have tried to find some solutions. I believe that a breakthrough has been made and you will find it well documented in the recently issued U.S.O.E. brochure Developing Language Skills of the Culturally Different. I am happy to note that Detroit's Clarence Wachner and Ruth I. Golden are represented by significant contributions.[11]

But the slow, the disadvantaged, and the culturally different will not be the only students whose individual needs will be met during this decade. The average, the bright, the under-achiever, the late-bloomer, all merit the same careful study. What a difference it might have made to the entire world if at the right time Lee Harvey Oswald had been given the individual attention which he needed by his English teachers!

The fourth trend will be greater interest in language growth and development and the modifications we must make in our teaching. This means a greater understanding of historical linguistics, or the way in which our language developed, is constantly developing, and will develop in the future. This means also a re-evaluation of our concepts of the place of grammar instruction in our schools, whether it be the formal grammar of my high school days, the functional grammar of my beginning days as a teacher, or the structural and the generative grammar which is much talked about in many circles today.

I would not throw all grammar overboard or advocate wholly any single variety of grammar, but I do believe that there is a need for more controlled experiments on a massive scale and over a considerable period of time to determine exactly what

concepts of grammar we want to teach and how to teach them. Even a few small experiments in teaching the new structural or generative grammar may enable us to re-evaluate our instruction for achieving our ends more effectively. Linguists are not agreed on many things, but they are all agreed on this: that there is a large body of verified knowledge about our language which has not even begun to affect the vast majority of our colleagues. Study takes time, and in the crowded schedule of the average secondary English teacher, with his 175-200 pupils a day, there is precious little time for study of the facts of our language, for newer discoveries in our literature, or in the methodology of both. The great popularity of workshops in linguistics is a desirable trend, and I am happy to note that Detroit's Bernard Weiss is a leader in these workshops.

One of our most distinguished linguists, W. Nelson Francis, puts the matter thus:

> My plea, then, is for English teachers who are specifically and professionally informed about the English language. Furthermore, I believe that this information is even more important for elementary and secondary school teachers than it is for college teachers. It is, after all, in the earlier school years that most of the direct teaching of language goes on. By the time a student gets to college, his language habits are formed for better or worse, and it is a major operation to change them. Yet the graduate schools seem to believe that linguistic training is necessary only for Ph.D. candidates. Little beyond rather simple courses in the history of English is offered to undergraduates. Indeed, many liberal arts colleges of high standing, some of whose graduates go directly into teaching, give no work at all in historical or structural linguistics. I believe that this is wrong and that nobody should be entrusted with the teaching of English in the secondary school until he has had some solid linguistic training. At present he may escape this in his undergraduate education, but he can make it up in summer courses. Before long, I would hope to see thorough, up-to-date courses in the English language offered everywhere to undergraduates

planning to be teachers.

Linguistics is a broad field, too broad for the prospective teacher, whose primary concern must be with literature, to cover in any thoroughgoing way. It is all the more important that the content of his linguistic training be carefully chosen in the light of his future needs. Specifically I believe that he should have at least elementary acquaintance with four fields. He must know a good deal about grammar--not necessarily because he is to teach it directly, for he may not. But he must know how the English language works in order to help his students to a greater proficiency in its use. He must know something about regional dialects, social levels, and functional varieties of English and their relation to standard written English. Thirdly, he must know the outlines of the history of English and something about its older forms, so that he can see and perhaps reveal to his students the rich cultural heritage of the older literature and understand the growth and development of the English vocabulary. Fourthly, he must know something more about the English writing system than how to use it without error, so that he can understand the unique problems it presents and not simply classify all errors in its use as crimes against the state.[12]

The fifth trend will be greater emphasis on preparation of teachers in English. If English is the most important subject in the curriculum, it obviously cannot be taught by poorly prepared teachers. It has been said--and rightly so--that English is the easiest subject to teach poorly; and the hardest subject to teach well. One of the disturbing revelations in the volume The National Interest and the Continuing Education of Teachers of English is the woeful inadequacy of preparation of many teachers of English in elementary and secondary schools.[13] We must provide in our pre-service training for a proper balance between subject matter and education within a matrix of the right teaching personality that is capable of growing on the job. It is heartening to note that in many states the qualifications for teaching English in secondary schools are being increased. Of course, not much improvement can take place

as long as there is a teacher shortage, but at least the guidelines for better preparation in English are being set down now. And we can expect that when teaching conditions improve, more will enter our profession.

The sixth trend will be greater attention to supervision of English teaching and to the position of Supervisor of English for a state, a county or a city and to the Head of Department of an individual school.

For a long time to come, in spite of increased qualifications for new teachers, we shall be plagued either with a lack of English teachers or with inadequately trained ones. Who is to train them? Those cities, like my own, which have long had heads of departments who received higher salaries and allowances for supervision, have been more than satisfied with the outlay of funds for these valuable services in terms of improvement of instruction, improvement of teacher morale, and improvement of curriculum.

That the U. S. Office of Education considers the subject of instructional supervision of high priority was demonstrated on February 26, 28, and 29 when the first National Conference of English Supervisors was held at the Office of Education to which distinguished supervisors of English from all parts of the country and from all levels of instruction were invited to discuss their problems and to share solutions. One of the discussion leaders was Detroit's Clarence Wachner, who led us with his characteristic wisdom, tact, and wealth of experience. Out of these deliberations will come a brochure which will be of inestimable value in improving English instruction everywhere. In fact, all of us there wanted additional conferences sponsored either by the NCTE or the U. S. Office of Education--so profitable had we found this first one.

I have spoken of the greater importance of our subject, about the importance of the individual student, and the importance of the individual teacher and his supervisor. What can we expect about the curriculum of the 60's which will bring the student and the teacher together? It would be quite easy to say that the English curriculum of the 1960's will be an experience curriculum, or a correlated curriculum, or an individualized curriculum. But I believe that it may be something else. Each of the eleven Curriculum Centers funded by Project English is experimenting over a

period of about five years with new types of curricula. Eventually these will be made available to the Office of Education, which, in turn, will make them available to all of us. I would venture to say that these curricula will be based on more careful study than many promulgated in the past, that they will be such as have really been tried out with thousands of students, that they will have been carefully evaluated, and that they will have been prepared by the best brains and teaching experience available in the respective Curriculum Centers.

Meanwhile, curriculum construction is going on constantly all over the country, in individual schools, in large school systems, and in states, such as my own, which is in the process of completely revising its curriculum in English originally issued thirty years ago.

New curriculum procedures are taking place, ranging all the way from those followed in the summer institutes of the Commission on English in 1961-1962 to the cooperative endeavor in the individual schools. More and more school administrators and boards of education are realizing the value of released time to permit gifted teachers to meet for considerable periods of time to draw up curricula, and to make plans for their implementation, evaluation, and subsequent modification. The possibilities for individual growth as a result of work on curriculum in a leisurely atmosphere, among similarly devoted colleagues are truly enormous. The more teachers we can involve in curriculum construction, the more deeply will they become involved when the curriculum is to be implemented and evaluated.

What changes can we expect in <u>instructional materials</u> to be used to bring the curriculum, the pupils, and teachers into a working relationship for the realization of our objectives? I would venture to predict, first, that there will be greater utilization of the paperbacks in the literature programs, building of personal libraries, thematic approaches to literature, and re-evaluation of the classics. More copies of the standard classics (<u>Silas Marner</u>, <u>A Tale of Two Cities</u>, <u>The Odyssey</u>, etc.) are probably sold today in paperbacks than were sold in the good old days when only standard classics were taught. Those critics who accuse us of having abandoned the classics do not know the sales figures. Last year 300,000,000 paperbacks were sold in America. Many college bookstore managers inform us that their greatest sales came

from the paperbacks! Such firms as Bantam, Dell, Pocket Book, Scholastic, and New American Library are vying with each other for the greatest library of good literature for the schools, and we would be unwise not to take advantage of their offerings. Perhaps the millions of our secondary school students who will be introduced to the quality paperbacks of today will become the enlightened readers of the future.

Closely allied to the use of paperbacks is greater utilization of all the mass media: television, radio, movies, newspapers, magazines, and others. Think of all the wonderful things the mass media will be bringing us next month as we celebrate the quadricentennial of Shakespeare's birth! What a great service such magazines as Show and Scholastic Teacher have done with their special issues on Shakespeare. All over the country there will be exhibits, special performances, revivals of Shakespearean films, performances of his plays on the legitimate stage and on television. What a wealth lies in store for us in April. The alert teachers all over the country are already making their plans to celebrate the occasion. My point is that through the various mass media, wisely chosen, our students may have enriched experiences that were totally unknown in the days when we were in elementary and high school. I believe that there will be more and more utilization of these media in the coming year.

What will the technological advances be? Will the teaching machine replace the teacher? Hardly. Even the Latin language, which is usually considered a dead language and no longer subject to change, has had to accommodate itself to our own time: for, in the Latin language of our time, we read of a "typographica-machina" for typewriter and "via ferrea" for railroad. If the language of Cicero and Virgil is not afraid of machines, we as English teachers need not be. I well remember when my high school English teachers scoffed at the idea of a victrola; then at the moving picture projector, the tape recorder, etc. None of these eliminated a single teacher from his job, We are now being confronted with many new machines for teaching purposes. We simply do not know enough about how to use them; but we should learn more about them, Just as the typewriter enables us to write far more rapidly and, in many instances, more clearly than the old quill pen, so it is possible that some of the teaching machines may spare us from some of the more mechanical aspects

of teaching and permit us to work more creatively. No machine will ever replace the capable teacher; but it might well enable him to do his proper job more effectively.

The English program of the 1960's will make even greater use of libraries than ever before. Not only must the student of the sixties know that there is such a thing as the Dewey Decimal System (usually ascribed to Admiral Dewey of MAINE disaster fame; or to Thomas E. Dewey, former Governor of New York), but he must be aware of the countless resources of the well-equipped school library and be eager to use them. No longer can the Encyclopedia Britannica and the Reader's Guide be his only sources of reference for everything from the winner of last year's World Series to the Capital of Tanganyika. Gradually the student must become aware of the countless treasures in his school and local library and the sources for more information about them. This means that the status of the librarian may have to be changed from that of a cataloguer to teacher-librarian or counselor. She will have to learn something about teaching library skills and do everything possible to make the library a beehive of wholesome and worthwhile activity.

Finally, we must become aware of the new importance of English as a second language. In the March 1961 issue of the NEA Journal[14] we are told that in the Soviet Union about three-fourths of all students in higher education study English; 60% of all foreign language majors are in English. Throughout the world today there are 700,000,000 people who are either studying English or who know it. Never in the history of the world was a single language known to so many people. To teach English in the high school today requires a new world view which will manifest itself in the use of materials, in methods, in attitudes. In truth, these old words are true today: Nihil humanum mihi alienum est.

I believe that the 1960's will make great demands upon us all and upon our students as well. There is limited time for them to learn and limited time for us to teach them. We shall have to become acquainted with many new materials of instruction, with newer methods of utilizing them, with better ways to understand our students, and devices for evaluating our instruction. The English teacher, armed with a grammar, a literature anthology and a piece of chalk, may have been acceptable in my high school days, though he was rarely popular; but in the demanding years

ahead, he will be hopelessly out of date. If we are to cross the new frontiers of the mind, we must do so with all the weapons, all the ingenuity, skill and insight at our command.

Change, of course, is inevitable, and trends will continue to emerge. Our task is to prepare now to understand these trends; and by adequate preparation and bold practices enable our students to meet the brave new world of tomorrow with understanding and courage, with humanity and wisdom, with faith in themselves and in the ideals of our nation. The old cliche that the pen is mightier than the sword has become a frightening truth; the sword is now so terrible. Man has the choice, it would appear, to utterly destroy the human race by the sword; or to build a united and peaceful world by the simplest yet the most divine of all gifts--the human word. Was there ever a challenge to teachers more awesome, yet more inspring?

Footnotes

1. James Fleming Hosic, Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917).
2. W. Wilbur Hatfield, ed., An Experience Curriculum in English (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. 1935).
3. National Association of Secondary School Principals, "The Emerging Curriculum in English in the Secondary School," Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XXX, (February, 1946).
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6. Arno Jewett, English Language Arts in American High Schools, Bulletin 1958, No. 13 (Washington: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1958), Chapter II, pp. 6-16.

7. Joseph Mersand, Attitudes toward English Teaching (Philadelphia: Chilton, 1961).

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"Project English and College Teachers of English," English Record, XIV (October, 1963) pp. 36-40.

9. Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, Research in Written Composition, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963).

10. Arno Jewett, "Eclectic, Experimental Programs in Compositions," Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLVIII (February, 1964), pp. 18-52.

11. Arno Jewett, Joseph Mersand, Doris V. Gundersin, Developing Language Skills among the Culturally Different (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1964).

12. Excerpts from W. Nelson Francis, "Linguistics and Composition: The Teacher's Theoretical Training," The Phi Delta Kappan (Vol. 41, May, 1960), pp. 336-341.

13. Committee on National Interest, The National Interest and the Continuing Education of Teachers of English. (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964).

See also James R. Squire and Robert F. Hogan, "A Five Point Program for Improving the Continuing Education of Teachers of English," Bulletin of the N.A.S.S.P., XLVIII (February, 1964), pp. 1-17.

14. NEA Journal, March, 1961, p.4.

Editor's Note: Mr. Donaldson's essay raises an extremely searching question: Is the current, conference-inspired rush to convert conventional grammatical drill into structural or transformational pattern practice well advised or even feasible? Mr. Donaldson's cogent answer ought to provoke more than one kind of reaction.

WHAT MAKETH A READY MAN?

by Robert Donaldson

The place for structural linguistics in the English class is in the teacher's head. That's where it is needed most, and that's where it is most lacking. Until we build the insights offered by linguistics into our own nervous systems, our conferences will continue to be speckled by buckshot experiments designed to see whether kindergarteners can cope with transformational analysis. The trouble is that these experiments assume that the place for grammatical information is the pupil's head; results show that for this purpose the new grammars are about as effective as the old. A better place for grammatical insight is the teacher's head: the results of such an experiment would be transformational indeed.

For let us admit that teachers' heads are not filled with such understanding now. Thirty years after Bloomfield, the National Council finds that less than one-fifth of the teacher-preparing institutions in the country require a course in modern English grammar. Part of the results of such linguistic ignorance are professional scandals like the reception of the third edition of the New International. If English teachers lack as much linguistic enlightenment as Wilson Follett, heaven knows what must be going on in our classes. And it does seem that our professional stance is still that of Joos' grammatical nit-picker. The other day a colleague objected to my saying, "Who are you thinking of?". I once refereed a departmental rhubarb over the propriety of Eliot's "Let us go then, you and I." We have all been assaulted by

teachers who object to words like irregardless (irregardless of context), and ask questions like, "Why isn't it an utopia?". Perhaps these are outstanding examples of linguistic innocence, but I do not believe they are untypical ones. Certainly they are topped by the two professors currently teaching courses in English usage at Michigan universities who assign status labels to words without having to know their context.

But I recite the obvious. The concepts and implications of structural linguistics are still brand new to most English teachers. Our assumptions, our attitudes, our classroom practices--almost all are free of linguistic insight. Yet our ideal teacher of English ought to be an Edward Sapir--a person thoroughly and deeply informed about language habits and human affairs, a man committed enough to language teaching to make it a lifetime, humanistic study.

The greatest need for the insights of structural linguistics lies on our side of the desk, behind our pens, beneath our attitudes. Let us go then, you and I, irregardless of conferences, and make ourselves ready men. After all, who should we think of first?

THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADITION IN STRUCTURAL LINGUISTICS

by Harold V. King

In order to understand more fully the issues that have been brought into focus in the discussion of structural grammar, it might be useful to put the term itself, "structural grammar," into its historical setting. As we try to figure out the inner workings of the English language, and try to explain them to our students, are there really some important differences between the structural approach to this task and the other approaches that we might choose?

The first thing we think of is "traditional" grammar, which is generally supposed to be the direct opposite of the structural or descriptive view. And it is certainly true that the grammar textbooks of the early nineteenth century (to go back no further than that) were whole-heartedly slanted toward the eradication of improprieties in the use of English. The teachers and textbook writers, knowing how their students deviated from the standard literary language in their everyday use of English, naturally directed their efforts at the correction of these deviations.

In those days there was very little in the way of scientific, objective study of the structure of the language. One reason for this was thatnobody knew very much about it; and another reason was that most of the instruction in grammatical theory was taken care of in the Latin classes. The English grammar books of that time just assumed that the students would already know most of the basic concepts and terminology. What the student needed was not elementary instruction in grammatical theory, but rather practice in the application of this knowledge to the improvement of his English.

But a gradual change in all this was to come about during the latter part of the nineteenth century. A tremendous amount of solid scientific work had been done by European linguists, mainly in the comparative study of the Indo-European family of languages. This in turn had given impetus to the development of more accurate descriptive grammars, not only of these languages but also of some outside the Indo-European group.

The first serious scientific studies of English grammar had their roots in this scholarly tradition. The work of Henry Sweet, published during the 1890's, shows a revolutionary departure from the old ideas of authoritarianism and prescriptivism. The principles of the new science of language are shown also in the work of Otto Jespersen and Harold Palmer, as well as in the monumental grammars of English prepared by Poutsma and the other great Dutch scholars.

What were these principles? Jespersen emphasizes two of them in particular. The first is that "Language is primarily speech." It was the science of phonetics, as developed during the nineteenth century, that made it possible to study languages from this point of view instead of taking written records as the primary source of data. The second principle is that "The grammar of each language constitutes a system of its own." It was mainly the comparative and historical studies of the great continental scholars that led to the clear realization of the importance of this principle. Today it hardly seems necessary to mention it; yet there are still traces of the old notion that the grammatical categories of Latin are somehow universal.

What lesson can we draw today from all this? The most important thing, it seems to me, is that the American structuralists of the past thirty years or so have not by any means attempted to overthrow the work of the scholarly and scientific linguists of the nineteenth century. What they have been fighting against is rather the cultural lag that shows up even today in the pre-scientific authoritarianism and mythology about language found in so many of the popular books about the English language--and even in some of our school textbooks. In this battle, the so-called revolutionary descriptive linguists have been marching shoulder to shoulder with Sweet, Jespersen, and Palmer, and with a host of other scholars of as much as a hundred years ago.

So I would like to emphasize the continuity of the scientific study of language rather than the artificial divisions into rival camps that are so apparent in the polemical treatises of some of our learned journals. If a hundred years is not enough to establish a scientific tradition, you can carry it back to the Hindu

grammarians of the fourth or fifth century B.C.; and in all that time the greatest steps forward were made not by those who revered tradition but by those who questioned it. The greatest tradition is the tradition of dissent and inquiry. That is the tradition that Bloomfield and Fries devoted themselves to carrying forward. And it is entirely in keeping with that same tradition that in the past five or ten years a new generation of linguists has risen up to overthrow many of the most cherished notions of the structuralists, who were the revolutionaries of only a few years ago.

Well, regrettable perhaps, that is the climate of linguistic science. It is hardly a climate that is comfortable for the teacher of English grammar. It is certainly not one in which the people who write our textbooks and design our courses of study can feel at home. But if we enjoy exhilaration rather than comfort, if our curiosity is quickened by the stimulation of intellectual dissension, if we believe that the enthusiasm of a student can be aroused by the prospect of really figuring out how it is possible for him to talk and think and write, then we will not only put up with these repeated upheavals in the world of grammar but even hail them as proof of the vitality that linguistics can bring to the language arts curriculum.

A DIALECTIC ON GRAMMAR

by Marvin L. Greene

One of the most confusing issues in our fast-changing profession today is the role of linguistics in the teaching of English. We have heard pros and cons, charges and countercharges; we have heard from enthusiastic exponents and stubborn reactionaries. Some have eagerly attempted to learn more about the subject, even going where "angels fear to tread." A few of us have closed our eyes, our ears, our minds, and hoped that linguistics would just quietly go away. It won't. And I believe that it is time for a few clarifications. As a consequence, I have organized my brief remarks under the title, "A Dialectic on Grammar."

First of all, linguistics is the scientific investigation of language; it is the study of both the spoken and the written signals through which a social group communicates. However, some exponents have overstressed the value of spoken signals while reactionaries have often failed to consider them at all. Obviously, the truth can be ascertained only by drawing inferences from both.

Again, linguists observe that languages change, that taste in language style changes and that consequently pronunciation, grammatical forms, and the meanings of words are neither good nor bad, right nor wrong. Rather, they derive their preferred forms from the social mores of a selected class in a linguistic community. Some zealots have taken this to mean that English teachers have no right to tell Johnny either what to say or how to say it. Yet, it is quite clear that the English teacher's responsibilities differ from those of the linguists. Johnny must not only learn language, but that language also reflects class and that he will be limited in communicating if he can use only the language of the less-dominant class. This instruction is the task of the English teacher.

Linguists also try to separate meaning from grammar. For example, in the sentence, "Jimmy Hoffa is president of the United States," they might say we are dealing with a grammatical utterance. Some linguists might be content to argue that there is nothing wrong with the grammar. The English teacher, however, is responsible

not only for grammaticality, but also social and political accuracy. Most English teachers would like to cultivate a greater dedication to the truth, and hence they are firmly committed to the semantic dimensions of language study.

Finally, linguists distinguish their efforts as a field of investigation rather than a philosophy of education. In other words, they are concerned with what grammar is, and not with whether or how we teach it. As English teachers, however, with a responsible philosophy of education, we must decide whether we teach any grammar at all. We must determine when, why, and how much grammar we shall teach.

In a re-determination of our responsibility, we should re-investigate traditional grammar. Colleges turn out teachers yearly who presume to condemn this grammar completely without first knowing what it is. This kind of action does not exemplify the true investigative spirit. Secondly, we must continue our exploration of historical grammar. Some of us realize that it is needed to explain irregular verbs such as buy, bought, bought. Thirdly, we must be able to use the contributions of structural linguistics in such areas as word order, intonation, and structural signals. Fourth, many of our youngsters need to know how passives, interrogatives, and negatives can be generated from simple kernel sentences.

ENGLISH SENTENCES AND GENERATIVE GRAMMARS

by Joe Darwin Palmer

> "Human speech is like a cracked kettle on which we tap crude rythms for bears to dance to, while we long to make music that will melt the stars."
> --Flaubert

Traditional grammar gives us rules with which we can produce many sentences, but because traditional grammar is like a beginners' cookbook, it lets us make only certain easily-explained sentences. Even in its most sophisticated form, in very explicit diagramming rules, it fails to provide us with ways to distinguish between sentences which we feel to be quite different. For example, the rules of traditional grammar can't explain the difference between "John is easy to please" and "John is eager to please." Consequently, the dogma of Immediate Constituent Analysis, the idea that all sentences are composed like Chinese boxes whose relationships can be labelled structures of modification, predication, complementation, or co-ordination, is simply too vague to help us describe all the sentences of English.

Furthermore, grammar is a big word. It can mean many things to many people. We must distinguish between mathematical grammar and anthropological grammar. The former has to do with ideal systems, the latter with such matters as discovery procedures and the development of writing systems for hitherto unwritten languages. The mathematical grammars have to do with language as it <u>should</u> exist, with the best generalization that can be made about it; the anthropological grammars with the speech of an individual as a typical member of a language community and the formal characteristics of his speech which help to signal meaning. The former may be called mathematical or generative or transformational, but more specifically a generative grammar is a set of rules by means of which an infinite number of correct sentences can be formed. Traditional or old-fashioned grammar attempted to prescribe such rules for the formation of good sentences. Some grammars of English which have grown out of anthropological investigations, like Professor Fries', have provided generative rules in addition to positively astounding observations about the structure of language. But both the old-fashioned grammar and the structural grammars have

failed to provide for the generating of all the correct sentences of the language.

Now we have a theory of grammar which promises to provide us with sets of rules which will enable us to generate all the correct sentences and only the correct sentences of English. Transformational grammar promises a set of rules which will take up where the others broke down.

Professor Noam Chomsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has claimed that any language can be characterized by a description of the set of abilities which the speakers of the language possess in order to produce its basic phrases and to change and join together these phrases according to specific rules. These rules-of-formation are not merely inductive generalizations drawn from a body of examples, but a system from which it is possible to derive an infinite set of sentences.

As teachers we will benefit from this mathematical grammar as it makes explicit the sub-classes of the parts of speech and the words which we can use with them. Each of us is continually adding to his store of knowledge about how to use our language. Correct, effective usage is one of the main concerns of English teachers because rhetorical possibilities depend on usage. Before we choose a certain locution we ought to know how to use the verb of the locution and its accompanying words properly so that we will be understood as fully as possible.

The phrase-structure rules of transformational grammar will show all the verb classes of English and all the particles, adverbs, adjectives and nominals which must or may accompany specific verbs. It will give rules for using all the English verbs and the words that go with them. We will then be able to systematize these rules instead of teaching them intuitively and by accident as we do now.

We are all agreed that usage is basically a matter of applied sociology. We know that a good English student is aware of levels of usage. He is aware of the emotional contents of words, and of his responsibility toward accuracy in reporting. He is conservative in preserving such distinctions as the differences between bring and take, or imply and infer. He is careful to use the right words to fit the particular situation he finds himself in. But he doesn't really know his native language. No one knows the grammar of English completely. The freqently-heard

statement that a normal five-year-old has mastered English grammar means that children master important general patterns at early ages. Really, kids are practically dumb. Youthful eloquence is rare--even among high school seniors, even among college seniors.

What our students lack is usable knowledge of English phrase-structure rules--the actual how-to-say-it mechanism that effective language depends on.

The kernel sentence idea is one level of explicitness of the phrase-structure rules of our transformational grammar, an awareness of which should give the student a set of models to copy. Exercises based on this classification of English verbs ought to make the student conscious of subtle shades of meaning and of the real meaning of what he has written, if a knowledge of grammar can help a student improve his writing and reading.

A kernel sentence is one of a set of predicates. That is, if we set up classes to fit all English verbs into, and then use a verb of one class to make a sentence with, we have an example of a kernel sentence--a typical sentence illustrating one class of verbs. For a grammar to be of any use we must be able to abstract and set up groups and sets like these kernels for purposes of comparison. A complete phrase-structure grammar would involve a detailed description of all the lexical items in the language--a dictionary with rules of formation for every word. Unfortunately, such a complete grammar would be so thorough as to be useless. On the other hand, the categories presented by traditional grammars were so general and facile as to be nearly useless. There were so many apparent exceptions to every rule! Such categories as subject, object, predicate nominative, etc., are useful but inexplicit. What the new grammar does is to give us ways of looking at sentence-structure more carefully, more thoroughly, more explicitly, in order to preserve useful concepts and give us real examples of what they refer to.

Those who are familiar with Paul Roberts' English Sentences will recognize the place of kernel sentences in a generative grammar and will observe that this list I present is a refinement of his and similar lists. By way of conclusion, I offer the following basic description of kernel sentence-types:[1] (See page 23)

A. 1. be plus adjective: be snide

2. be plus noun phrases: be a doctor

3. be plus location adverb: be at church

Note: be has three different meanings in the above.

B. 1. Vin intransitive plus optional manner adverb: laugh (heartily)

2. Vin intransitive plus location adverb plus optional manner adverb: lie there (happily)

3. Vin intransitive plus motion adverb plus optional manner adverb: get up (willingly)

C. 1. Vbe become plus adjective: become sick

2. Vbe become plus noun phrase: become a man

D. 1. Vst stay (remain) plus adjective: remain grumpy

2. Vst stay plus adverb: stay in the tree

3. Vst stay plus noun phrase: remain a doctor

4. Vap (appearance) plus adjective: look impossible

5. Vap (appearance) plus noun phrase: look a fright

6. Vsen (sensation) plus adjective: taste horrid

7. Vgr grow plus adjective: grow monstrous

E. 1. Vt_1 transitive: find the book

2. Vt_2 transitive (deletable object): eat tacos

3. Vt_x transitive (inseparable preposition): look at him

4. Vt_{for} transitive (for): do him a favor

5. Vt_{to} (to): give him a dollar

6. Vt_{prt} transitive (particle): depend on the army

7. Vt_{adj} transitive plus adjective: consider him strong

8. Vt_{nom} transitive plus noun phrase: elect Ike president

9. Va_{mot} transitive plus motion adverb: aim the sun at him

10. Vb_{sep} transitive (separable particle): bring the sheaves in

F. 1. V_{mid} pseudo-transitive (no passive transformation is possible): cost a penny[2]

Footnotes

1. I am indebted to the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan for the research grant which made the investigation of these sentence-types possible, and to Professor James Downer for helpful criticism.

2. The chart presented on page 23 is a synthesis of information suggested in:

Noam Chomsky, Syntactic Structures (The Hague, 1957).

_____, Third Texas Conference on Problems in the Analysis of English, A. A. Hill, ed. (Austin, 1962).

Robert B. Lees, The Grammar of English Nominalizations (Bloomington, 1960).

Paul Roberts, English Sentences (San Jose, 1962).

Andreas Koutsoudas, "The Structure of the Simple Sentence," Harold V. King, ed. (unpublished monograph, Ann Arbor, 1962).

TWO CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS OF GENERATIVE GRAMMAR

by Samuel B. Stone

The tremendous importance of Chomsky's generative or transformational grammar for linguistic science is unquestionable. I believe it is also the most promising idea that high school English teachers could borrow from linguistics. I will attempt to make a case for this belief by suggesting two quite different ways of using generative grammar in the classroom.

Most English teachers believe it necessary to teach pupils to recognize subjects and predicates. No one has ever proved that this skill helps pupils to write better; but unless teachers and pupils have a common set of terms, they will find it difficult to talk about style and the mechanics of writing. Subject and predicate are minimum essentials for classroom vocabulary. At least, if practice mirrors belief, this is the faith of a large number of teachers.

Every teacher who has tried to teach subject and predicate has heard pupils identify John as the subject in sentences like:

Jerry saw John running after the bus.

Sometimes the pupil cares enough to argue about it: John is the actor and running is the action, he will say. At this point, the pupil "has" the teacher, for there is nothing in the actor-action definition to show the pupil his error. He has simply done what the definition told him to do. Of course, he might have selected Jerry and saw, but running wins out -- perhaps because it is more of an action than saw.

If subjects and predicates are not actor-action combinations, what are they? The answer is surprisingly easy. A subject is a noun or noun equivalent that is linked to a verb phrase by concord, and a predicate is the verb phrase to which it is joined.[1] A very brief list of formal signals comprises the system of concord which clearly identifies subjects and predicates and the relationship between them. The list would be complicated somewhat, by various word order signals, if we were dealing with transformational sentences. At this stage, however, we need be concerned only with kernel sentences and hence only with the brief list that follows.

Subject signals are of two kinds. The most obvious is the number of the noun, that is, the Ø or S ending showing singularity or plurality -- in agreement with

is, was, are, or were, or with a verb ending in S or Ø. For example:

The leader speaks

The leaders speak

The leader (Is / was) brave

The leaders (are / were) brave

The other signal type is the nominative case of pronouns.

Predicate signals are a little more complicated. Obviously the system of S's and Ø's already mentioned and the finite forms of be -- am, is, are, was, and were -- must be included here. The addition of the simple past tense forms and the model auxiliaries completes the list.[2]

These predicate signals may be listed somewhat more abstractly, as five morphemes that can occur in verb phrases: S, Ø, D, A, and Z. The morpheme Z produces was, A produces am, and D produces were and all other past tense forms. Any uncompounded English predicate must contain one and only one of these forms.[3] Note also that such words as was, shall, and sang never occur as anything but predicates, except in sentences about language.

A set of exercises quite similar to those used in traditional grammar teaching but based on this more precise analysis can be used to teach pupils to recognize subjects and predicates. The procedure might be most easily understood if we list some sentences along with the notations the pupil would be asked to make, and then we can examine and interpret them:

1. (Ø The driver) (S tells jokes on his boss.)
2. (S His buddies) (Ø egg him on.)
3. (Ø The boss) (D overheard him one day.)
4. (Ø The driver) (D sang a new tune then.)
5. (Ø The show) (D had begun.)
6. (S The men) (D were coming yesterday.)
7. (Ø The rain) (S has been falling in torrents.)

As in traditional grammar, the complete subject and the complete predicate are isolated. The simple subject and the verb phrase -- that is, the main verb and whatever auxiliary words are present -- are underlined; again this is identical with procedures used in many traditional handbooks. The remaining steps, however, differ somewhat. Above the simple subject, number is indicated by Ø for singular or by S for plural. Finally, above the first word of the verb phrase, which always carries the concord morpheme for the verb, S, Ø , A, Z, or D is written.

Modal auxiliaries have been left out of the above list intentionally, because they do not take S as an ending. A teacher who understands Chomsky rather thoroughly could handle this by teaching the rules can + S ⟶ can, shall + S ⟶ shall, shall + D ⟶ should, and so forth. Sentences could be analyzed as:

Ø S
(The noise) (can drive you crazy.)

S Ø
(The stories) (will make no sense.)

Ø D
(The soldier) (could tell us nothing.)

However, most teachers might find it easier to adopt a sixth symbol, M, to cover all occurences of modals. That is, the pupil would be taught to label them with M rather than with the morphemic symbols S, Ø , A, Z, and D.

The exercises should meet three specifications. First, they should begin with sentences without modals, have, or be as auxiliaries. Second, the expansion to longer verb phrases should follow naturally from the word order system. Finally, all exercises should use a variety of kernel patterns, not just one.

This schema has been tried by only two of my student teachers with ninth grade pupils. The reactions of the pupils were "lukewarm." The typical comment seemed to be, "Yes, this is better than traditional grammar and we wish we had started out with it. But we can't see any reason for learning subjects and predicates all over again."

In evaluating this plan, teachers should be aware of one critical point: I have assumed the validity of the traditional objective of teaching pupils to recognize subjects and predicates. I have attempted, therefore, only to suggest a method for improving the existing curriculum and have proposed no new course of study. I am

merely but frankly saying: If we must teach subject and predicate le[illegible] really teach them and quit blaming the pupil when he goes wrong because he follows ou[illegible] inadequate definitions.

My second suggestion for using generative grammar in the classroom aims much higher. Because this grammar is based on scientific method and mathematical logic and because it looks toward a comprehensive theory of language, several fundamental educational goals are implicit in it. We can use it to teach pupils some of the problems involved in thinking and some of the intricacies of scientific procedure. By probing the nature of language, we can further the humanistic pursuit of understanding the nature of man. And we might even do something to break down the dangerous wall of separation between the sciences and the humanities.

What I propose is an inductive method of teaching implemented by a sequence of exercises and questions. A few examples will show how the plan works.

The first two exercises or "problems" teach the pupils to detach the inflectional morphemes for number, agreement, and past tense from the nouns and verbs bearing them. The third exercise gives the pupils strings of words and detached inflections and directs them to write "ordinary" sentences; if they follow directions, however, some of the things they write will not be English sentences. The purpose of these exercises is merely to supply data for questions like those in Problem 4; the important learning takes place in answering the questions.

Problem 1

Rewrite the following sentences in the form illustrated by examples 1 and 4.

1. The detective chases the thief.
2. The detectives chase the thief.
3. The detective chased the thief.
4. The detectives chased the thief.

1. The + detective + chase + S + the + thief.
2. .....
3. .....
4. The + detective + S + chase + D + the + thief.

Problem 2

Using the sentences given in Problem 1, fill in the blanks in the following "strings." Insert S where it is needed. For -ed, write in a capital D. In the blanks still not filled, write $\emptyset$.

	1		2	
1. The + detective +	_____	+ chase +	_____	+ the + thief.
2. The + detective +	_____	+ chase +	_____	+ the + thief.
3. The + detective +	_____	+ chase +	_____	+ the + thief.
4. The + detective +	_____	+ chase +	_____	+ the + thief.

Problem 3

Rewrite the following strings as ordinary sentences. Work according to the symbols given no matter what happens in the sentences.

	1		2	
1. The + story +	$\emptyset$	+ make +	S	+ no + sense.
2. The + idea + S		+ make +	S	+ no + sense.
3. The + story + S		+ frighten +	$\emptyset$	+ me.
4. The + idea +	$\emptyset$	+ make +	$\emptyset$	+ no + sense.

Problem 4

Answer the following questions. (Use the back of the paper if you need to.)

1. What happens when $\emptyset_1$ and $\emptyset_2$* occur in the same sentence?
2. What happens when S_1 and S_2 occur in the same sentence?
3. What is the relationship of S_1 to $\emptyset_2$?
4. What is the relationship of S_2 to $\emptyset_1$?
5. What is the relationship of S_2 to $\emptyset_2$?

6. What is the relationship of D to S_1 and $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_1$?

7. What is the relationship of D to S_2 and $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_2$?

8. What reasons can you give for expanding the strings to make room for $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}$?

*The subscripts refer to the position of S and $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}$ under the numbers in Problems 2 and 3.

A brief examination of the concepts involved in Problem 4 seems appropriate. Questions 1 and 2, which ask about the occurrence of $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}$ with $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}$ or of S with S, seek the concept of grammaticality as that which is acceptable to the native speaker. Questions 3 and 4 are probably the most difficult because some appealing half-truths are the most obvious answers; such answers as "S_1 occurs with $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_2$" or "S and $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_2$ occur together" are not entirely acceptable for either S_1 or $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_1$ can also occur with D. The answers must be as precise as "$\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_2$ can occur only with S_1." Questions 5 and 7 establish S_2, $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_2$, and D as members of a class or set of items having common position and mutal exclusiveness as their defining characteristics. Question 8 introduces the idea of creating "fictitious" elements to simplify the job of analysis.

Later in the program, an exercise is given in which the nouns and verbs in the first six sentences are already labeled; the pupil is directed to examine the labeled words and to identify the nouns and verbs in the remaining sentences. An important feature of this exercise is the use of several words that can occur as either nouns or verbs, such as work, answer, ship, play, fight, and catch.

No definitions of noun and verb are given; it is the pupil's job at this point to formulate them himself. He must also answer the questions:

> How can you tell whether work, catch, or fight is a noun or a verb?
>
> What is the relationship of S_1, S_2, $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_1$, $\textcircled{\scriptsize 1}_2$ and D to the terms noun and verb?
>
> In a certain sense you already knew what nouns and verbs were before you started studying grammar. In what sense is this true?

> Do the words noun and verb really matter? If we wanted, why couldn't we call such words "whatsits" and "whosits"?

One of the side values sought in the program is a recognition of the difference in precision demanded by scientific discourse and the language of "well-gred ease." Ordinary language is full of ambiguity and imprecision because we get along tolerably well correcting each other's misunderstanding through repetition, gesture and direct actions. Science cannot afford such inefficiency; it demands statements like $X \longrightarrow Y$ but $Y \not\longrightarrow X$. If we presumed to demand this of everyday speech, of course, most of our sentences would be like still-born infants strangled by their own umbilical cords.

Ultimately this sequence of tasks leads inductively to Chomsky's highly generalized and compact description of the kernel structure of English grammar. Once the kernel has been learned, it is possible that some pupils could be given the task of creating their own abstract models for describing more complicated sentences. The procedure, I think, is not as "far out" as it may appear. A case -- a very strong one -- can be made for the necessity of combining abstraction and creativity in the curriculum in ways such as this.

The questions employed are loose enough to allow errors. Moreover, they are not detailed enough to provide all of the cues pupils would need to identify their own wrong answers. However, the program is not intended as material for a teaching machine, but as a means of bringing systematic induction into a conventional classroom. Obviously, a teacher with no knowledge of generative grammar would find a loose program for a tight subject extremely difficult to manage. But for the teacher who has the knowledge, or who is willing to acquire it, here is a way of freeing language study from sheer memory and drill and making it a plaything for his pupils' intelligence.

(See Footnotes on next page)

Footnotes

1. At first glance, this statement may seem circular. However, it is based on a mathematical and noncircular identification of a set of morphemes which constitute the concord system of English predicates. It is beyond the scope of this paper, however, to show this. Cf. Noam Chomsky, Syntactic Structures, The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1957, pp. 38 ff.

2. The anomalous auxiliary ought could be listed here, too.

3. This seemingly strange inclusion of the past tense in a discussion of concord is justified by Chomsky's demonstration that D belongs to the same syntactic series or set as the S and ⌀ of verbs. It agrees, of course, with either or S of nouns. Cf. Chomsky, loc. cit.

Sequence in the Teaching of Composition: A Rationale and a Product

by Floyd L. Bergman

I'm sure that English teachers would not question why written composition should be taught. I'm also sure that all of them are concerned with how it should be taught or, to be more specific, how written composition can be taught more effectively under the conditions that prevail. And English teachers are very familiar with those conditions.

Certainly all of them are well aware of the hue and cry which has been raised concerning the condition of the nation's English programs. In 1959 the Committee on the Basic Issues in the Teaching of English published a report clarifying 35 issues that must be settled to improve our English programs. Five of the 35 issues were devoted to composition, and they called primarily for "purposeful, satisfying, sequential and cummulative (writing) experiences for students."

Two years later the National Council of the Teachers of English specified more needs in another report called The National Interest and the Teaching of English. Among other concerns, composition received a thorough going-over. The staggering load of correcting the desired composition-a-week was reviewed. The National Association of Secondary School Principals' appeal that writing should be taught systematically, sequentially and continuously was reported. The statement by the Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board that "composition should be neither infrequent nor incidental" and that it should be "part of each week's work" was published in the NCTE report. In its conclusion the report called for research in finding new teaching methods that would implement these proposals. Proportionately troubled and moved to action, teachers of English, school administrators and college personnel returned to their classrooms to engage in experimental projects to update the teaching of English.

Meanwhile, much has been said about sequence in composition; but so far, not much research in this area has taken place, although many have called for it. Albert R. Kitzhaber, new president of the NCTE, recently published a survey on the need for sequence in composition skills. In the past four years, from historical Philadelphia

to the sunny shores of Miami Beach and the equally sunny California coast and points between, convention talk and journal reports have pointed up the need for sequential approaches to the English skills.

Related to this national trend, my remarks are on the underlying philosophy and rationale behind some local studies and experimentation on sequence and on individualized composition materials. With my colleague Dr. William E. Hoth of Wayne State University and with Dr. Ray Budde of the East Lansing public schools, I have spent two years developing materials for instruction in composition skills. So, one can see, it may be difficult for me to avoid speaking without some bias.

The materials of which I speak have grown out of a philosophy that can be summarized in three brief statements:

1. Written composition is a highly individualized skill in which but few students are adequately or equally competent at any one grade level. Individualized methods must be used to teach these skills.
2. Although practice does not always make perfect, consistent work on any skill is bound to bring about some improvement. Thus, teachers must be provided with ways to assign more compositions and spend less time correcting them.
3. Generally speaking, most schools and teachers are <u>not</u> doing an adequate job of teaching writing. The reasons may be many, but certainly one reason is the lack of a sequential program that meets the needs of a busy teacher and his students in overcrowded classrooms.

With these three points converted into motivation and into working goals, the authors have produced a self-progress, sequential, multi-level written composition laboratory. More than one third of the lab has been field tested satisfactorily in five states by 30 teachers and over 1,000 students in grades six through nine. The lab was found to be effective in all four grades. The reading level has tested out for seventh and eighth grade.

The lab has been accepted by a well-known educational publisher, Science

Research Associates of Chicago, Illinois, and it will be published in the fall under the tentative name SRA "Writing Instruction Laboratory for grades 7 and 8" or "WIL 7 and 8." Beginning with this lab and one for grades 5 and 6 now being completed, the firm hopes to produce a K-12 series of sequential writing labs.

Now I would like to tell you how the lab is an attempt to answer some of the composition class problems that now exist in the schools. I have limited the problems to 10. Along with each problem, I shall present the rationale for thinking that the lab might help overcome the problem.

1. Compositions are not assigned frequently enough to give students the needed practice. The lab provides 11 major composition assignments on three levels of difficulty. These compositions are teacher-corrected. Besides the 11 major compositions, there are 25 practice writing assignments that each student selects from among 85 Writing Ideas. These Writing Ideas often list specific topics for added motivation. Thus, a safe estimate on the total number of Writing Ideas is well over 1,000. With 11 major compositions and 25 practice papers, the students have a total of 36 writing assignments--or an average of one for each week of the school year.

2. Correcting compositions is a burden for teachers because of high class enrollments. In the composition lab this correcting burden is greatly reduced because all the practice writing assignments are self-evaluated. Only the 11 major compositions are corrected by the teacher--and due to the self-pacing concept, these compositions trickle in a few from the class each day. Field tests showed hardly more than five papers per class. And these can usually be evaluated right in the classroom with the student writer present. Thus, conference time is provided--the best and only way to correct compositions effectively. Compositions can then be corrected quickly and efficiently since guide sheets and check lists are provided to assist both student and teacher.

3. Composition topics are often assigned without regard for the type of discourse or for the necessary writing skills. The authors have tried to provide written composition assignments that give the student practice in the skills needed for a particular type of writing in three areas: Narration, Description, and Exposition. The skills are placed in a sequence to enable the student to attack a certain kind of discourse in a particular manner. This sequence usually begins with choosing suitable topics. Planning and organizing follow. Then techniques to catch and maintain reader interest are followed by lessons on revising. Each step of the way is planned completely and carefully for the convenience of both teacher and student.

4. It is often difficult for a teacher to find appropriate composition topics that meet varied ability and interest levels, let alone, socio-economic backgrounds. The hundreds of writing suggestions provided in the lab have been chosen on the basis of national interest-level inventories. Some topics are rural, others are small town and large city. Some are for the space-minded; others are for the water enthusiasts. Topics are chosen from twelve general interest areas: Adventure; Animals and Nature; For Girls Only; Hobbies; Hopes, Fears and Ideas; My Family; Mystery; People and Places; School Affairs; Science and Science Fiction; Sports; and Teenagers. Students can also keep their own personal list of topics which provides a handy source of experience-centered writing ideas.

5. There is usually a lack of good student and professional model compositions readily available in the classroom for purposes of illustrating certain composition skills. Almost every lesson in the lab contains one or two models which employ the skills being studied in a particular lesson. The student has ample time to read and to analyze some 30 student models and more than 40 professional models.

6. Motivating composition classes to write is often a problem. The authors have discovered that the entire lab is motivational because of its emphasis on self: the self-direction, the self-progress, the self-pacing, the self-confidence gained in following easy-to-read, uniform directions, and the self-correcting helps provided with each of the writing assignments. Even the chance to move out of the desk for a specific purpose is motivation. In the Teacher's Handbook suggestions are made for additional motivation. The suggestion is also made to vary the class procedures so that the lab is not used day after day for weeks at a time. Field tests showed that three days per week met with student and teacher approval.

7. With prevailing methods of group instruction, bright students are held back and slow learners are moved ahead too quickly in heterogeneous classrooms. Since each student using the lab works at his own speed, this does not become a problem. The good student can skip the strengthening exercises that weak students must work. This slows down the weak student but it gives him more time to absorb certain skills before he is required to put them to use. He need not feel embarrassed by his position since far abler students often do the same remedial work simply because they were careless along the way. Also, on the basis of test scores, a weak student is directed to a simpler major composition than the advanced student writes. With the major compositions assigned on three levels of difficulty, each level is graded separately from the other two levels. Thus, weak students are not competing for grades with the strong student. But no student is confined to one level on the basis of one test score. Each student has repeated chances to move to higher levels.

8. Students are often required to consider too many skills or corrective measures in a single composition. As each student writes a practice writing exercise from the lab, he is being "tested" on his knowledge of usually not more than the three skills taught in the lesson. If a skill is particularly difficult, an entire lesson might be devoted to it. When the student gets to a major composition, he will find the skills have accumulated, but he is given careful instruction and guidance through the assignment. Simply by following the composition check lists, the student can be sure he is using the skills his teacher will want to see in his paper. He is also encouraged to proofread each paper carefully using the guide provided in his Writer's Notebook.

9. Textbooks and some programed teaching devices are often not sufficiently diversified and flexible to fit into a well-rounded English program. With its concentration on three types of discourse, the lab does not confine the student to one approach. In Narration he writes about personal experiences and make-believe topics. In Description he moves on to the skills of describing objects, places and people. Finally, he goes to exposition where he explains how to do something or how something works. Or he gives information or opinions on various subjects. Here, too, he utilizes his narrative and descriptive skills again. All of this writing can be correlated with literature, vocabulary, spelling, grammar and even the speaking and listening skills. The teacher is not bound to one single approach: some will use the lab as the focal point of the course, some will use it as enrichment, some will use it as remedial, and some will adapt it to their own teaching and grading methods.

10. Modern technology in English has incorporated some psychological research which has been done on learning and the thought process--particularly in programed learning. So far, little has been done with this information in the field of written composition. Although it cannot be classed as true programed instruction, the comp lab does provide some of the aspects of programing. (1) It is individualized. (2) Students progress at their own speed. (3) Reinforcement is provided for correct answe s and high test scores. (4) Knowledge is built inductively and sequentially, one skill at a time. (5) Students are branched to one of three levels of writing assignments depending on how well they move through the lessons.

Not everything in the lab is new and revolutionary. Many of the writing skills have been presented en masse in text books for years but not in the form used in the lab. Bite-sized, easily digested skills have been placed in a sequence but not without attention to individual need. Even with the lab, the irreplaceable teacher still corrects papers but not all at once or every weekend. The students still have to work hard by writing frequently, but not without knowing exactly what is expected of them.

Above all, based on what is available, the lab provides a giant step in the right direction. The authors do not believe the lab is the answer to a maiden's prayer, but with any success at all, it may bring closer the day when parents and teachers can say, "Why, Johnny can write!"

SOME TRENDS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL COMPOSITION

by Henry B. Maloney

In the ordinary course of English lessons, I suspect our students have fa motivation to write than I have had in this instance. Indeed, although print was a stimulus to me, it might well be a deterrent to them. One of the obvious verities that I've stumbled over in my years of teaching composition is that few students write very penetrating papers when the assignment is based on books they don't like. Dislike breeds uninterest, and the student finds himself so completely uninvolved in the matters of the book that he can't write a worthwhile paper on it. This dislike may emanate from a lack of characters in the book with whom he can empathize. Or it may spring from his inability to come to terms with the social milieu of the book. The female version of today's secondary school student, with her bouffant hairdo, exotic eyes, and omnipresent wad of gum, is probably located a little to the left of Jane Eyre and to the right of Jayne Mansfield. At the junior high school age, when her worldly knowledge is, we hope, rat... slight, it is difficult to transfer her vicariously into the mores of another era since she is still groping for an identity in her own period of history.

Contemporary literature--if the term itself is not a contradiction--tends to be rather naive when aimed at adolescents and rather lecherous when aimed at adults. Granted that there are some current books for young people which suggest topics worth exploring in written compositions. But many of today's books are written so gracelessly that we must hope that our young writers will somehow transcend the author's style in producing their own themes. Such hopes are usually in vain. Perhaps if more writers could put their words to paper with the kind of craftsmanship, the understatement, and the charm, that Allan Seager displays in A Frieze of Girls, we could lead more readers along the arduous path to better writing, although a book with a lower alcoholic content would probably be a more suitable selection for readers in secondary schools.

From literature, then, we have three criteria for a book if it is to provoke

a written assignment from the student who reads it. It should be appealing, it should provide an empathic situation, and it should be well written.

As I suggested earlier, the first of these qualities, "appeal," is related to motivation. I think at times we delude ourselves into believing that able and superior students need more motivation to write compositions than they actually do. The quickly organized and hurriedly written impromptu paper may compare favorably with the leisurely composition written at home. The latter may even lack zing because it has been rewritten too many times or because it is overpolished; and several polysyllabic, artificial sounding words stare out of it like red glass eyes in a dimestore trinket. Recently, at Burroughs Junior High School where I teach, the social studies department head and I conducted an experiment on motivation in reading. A multiple-choice test was devised for one of the stories in Practical English. Some groups were given the test "cold." Other groups of comparable ability were given all sorts of hoopla first. Their desire for better grades was appealed to, their class honor, their competitive nature and so on. Historical lead-ins to the story were used, as well as television lead-ins. When the results were toted up, the good groups who read the story and took the test without even expecting a grade did just as well as those who had been specially motivated. With the average and lower groups, however, the motivational procedures did produce higher scores. The moral is--and I believe it applies to writing as well as reading --save most of the fanfare and whoop-to-do for those whose intelligence ratings are C and lower.

These certainly are not new trends in composition, but I think they need re-emphasis every now and again. And I daresay it is not fresh advice to mention that excellence in expository composition should be our foremost goal. Nor is there anything novel in repeating that, under the heading "Expository Composition," we ought to be concerned with structure, with clear thinking, and with some degree of fluency in sentences or paragraphs. Perhaps it is new to say that we ought to be more tolerant of contemporary idiom if it is used with meaning and precision. Push as we may, we cannot shove Webster's Third International Dictionary back into the womb of

time (at best, a disconcerting figure of speech).

My hunch is that we infuse our composition classes with contemporary ideas by keeping our eyes and ears open for topics with built-in interest value for today's young people. This certainly does not mean exhuming the old chestnuts about embarrassing incidents, exciting moments, or summer vacation fun. At Burroughs, we have just begun a student council although the school has been in operation for twenty-eight years. It was rather heartening to read compositions about the potentialities of this group as seen through the eyes of eighth graders. Many students are concerned about eighteen-year olds voting. Furthermore, this issue has been around long enough for some of the discerning youngsters to recognize which reasons are little more than clichés and which are substantive. Some of them can also see how reasons poorly put together carry less conviction, less punch, than trite reasons in a well-written theme.

Have the Beatles contributed anything worthwhile to our culture? One boy never did get to the answer, and it may be just as well, but he did draw a neat distinction between fine arts as culture and a more anthropological definition of the term. Is a world's heavyweight champion obliged to carry any of the responsibilities of a leader? Should the State provide two more years of public education? And what about the public whipping post? Currently, some of my students are watching Mr. Novak in preparation for writing a paper. I hope that a few see him as Everyhero, the indomitable star of a homogenized television series. If one or two do break through the phony facade and see him as a sort of miracle worker, their compositions will have led them nearer the truth. I single out Mr. Novak partly because I am concerned with the image of my profession which is transmitted by television, and partly because this series is more pretentious than some.

You will note that I have dealt almost exclusively with content in remarking on new trends in composition. As to form, I'm quite satisfied if the writers at my level of concern can produce papers with beginnings, middles, and endings. I would suggest also that whether evaluation and correction of themes is achieved through

group work, opaque projectors, error charts, lay readers, or whatever, that as long as the writer comes out of the process with some concrete ideas for strengthening his particular paper, the follow-up procedure has been worthwhile.

In conclusion, let me say that I hope that I have not implied that composition writers should be concerned only with the truth of today's world or the quality of mass media products. Such topics comprise only one new approach to composition. It may be, however, that dealing with these topics first will help us to take students of English across that bridge from the known to the unknown. And in the junior high school, this can be quite a wide gap.

A P P E N D I X

Resolutions Adopted by the
14th Annual English Conference
Ferndale High School, Ferndale, Michigan
March 12, 1964
Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of School Studies

I. RESOLUTIONS OF APPRECIATION

WHEREAS the 14th Annual English Conference of the Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of School Studies in Ferndale High School, Ferndale, Michigan, on March 12, 1964, is made possible by the efforts of many groups and individuals; be it

RESOLVED: that MDBSS express its gratitude and appreciation to

1. The Ferndale Public Schools--superintendent; principal; Board of Education; Robert B. Mackay, the local arrangements chairman; custodial staff; food division; faculty and students--for their warm hospitality;

2. Bernard J. Reilly, the conference chairman, for the many hours spent in the preparation of the program;

3. M. Thelma McAndless, whose personal interest and deft guidance are invaluable to the successors of the English Committee of the MDBSS;

4. Dr. Roy Robinson, director of MDBSS, for his able counsel and intelligent leadership in the organization of the conference;

5. Member School Systems of MDBSS for their co-operation and support of the conference;

6. All the participants for their parts in the success of the conference; and

7. Dr. Joseph Mersand, for his distinguished service to the teaching profession and for his contributions to the MDBSS 14th Annual English Conference.

II. RESOLUTIONS OF COMMENDATION AND AFFIRMATION

WHEREAS research shows that there is a critical shortage of fully qualified teachers of English, a shortage which makes difficult an effective reduction in instructional load; be it

RESOLVED: that the MDBSS commend administrators who have made efforts (1) to limit the classes of English teachers to four classes of not more than twenty-five (25) each and (2) to encourage teacher participation in the selection of texts and in the development of curricula; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MDBSS commend The National Council of Teachers of English and the Michigan Council for their efforts to recruit teachers of English.

WHEREAS uncritical censorship of books continues; be it

RESOLVED: that the MDBSS reaffirm its support of the National Council of Teachers of English and the Michigan Council of Teachers of English on their stand for the Students' Right to Read.

WHEREAS, Project English of the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States Offices of Education has given financial support and professional cooperation to numerous projects of worth; be it

RESOLVED: that the MDBSS recognize the contribution of Project English for its efforts to improve professional standards and curricula.

WHEREAS there is a need for revision in the Copyright Law; be it

RESOLVED: that the MDBSS support the interpretations made by the National Council of Teachers of English.

III. RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION

WHEREAS the television industry has made efforts to cooperate with the English teaching profession; be it

RESOLVED: that the MDBSS recognize Mr. David Brinkley for his accomplishments and commend him for his acknowledging the encouragement given to him by his English teacher; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MDBSS commend the networks and the local TV stations that have carried such excellent dramatic productions as The Tempest, MacBeth, Cyrano de Bergerac, and Pygmalion.

WHEREAS there has been a proliferation of professional conferences by responsible organizations within the profession; be it

RESOLVED: that those organizations interested in English teaching and responsible for the scheduling of professional meetings for English teachers institute a planning board or central programming committee so that there will be fewer duplications of efforts within the districts, regions, and state.

WHEREAS a significant number of meetings, conferences, and special programs in the geographical region provide a rich source of publishable material; be it

RESOLVED: that the MDBSS lend all appropriate support and assistance to the establishment of a serial publication in the area of the teaching of English.

WHEREAS the number of English teachers has multiplied rapidly; be it

RESOLVED: that the MDBSS appoint a committee to investigate the need for a professional organization of Southeast Michigan English teachers.